



ATE THE BIRD OF FREEDOM

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THE bird was a turkey, not an eagle, and I'll not say that it met its fate Thanksgiving day, but it passed the way of all Thanksgiving birds about Nov. 23, 1903. This uncertain chronology is due to the fact that half a dozen of us war prisoners, who had escaped from the Georgia stockades, were making our homeward journey by the sole guidance of the north star. When we struck the eastern slope of the Cumberland mountains in southwestern Virginia late autumn was upon us. The plentiful wild grapes had been touched by frost, persimmons were dropping, dead ripe, and corn had been shucked and stored beyond our reach. We didn't know the day of the week, much less that of the month, for we passed days and nights sometimes hiding from pursuers in dark caves and slept from sheer exhaustion without reference to the rising or the setting of the sun. One day we came upon a cabin hidden in the mountain wilds occupied by a negro who, like ourselves, was a refugee. At the beginning of the war he had run away from his master in east Tennessee and started blindly to meet up with "Massa Linkum's sengers." Having lost his way and got frightened by the roaming bushwhackers who infested the mountains, he built a cabin and waited for that ju-

Black Sam n-e-b-e-r golt' eat turkey twell freedom done come. First turkey I coteh he git fat an' nice, an' freedom ain't come, so he git ole an' tough, an' I gib him ter de buzz'rds. Second turkey he git fat, too, but no freedom yit. He git tough, an' de buzz'rds git him. Den I coteh one mo', an' I say dis de bird o' freedom, shuah. Now, luk yer."

With that he led the way up the mountain side till he came to a tangle of wild grape vines which fell over the rocks and trees like a huge wall. These he parted deftly and conducted us to a spacious glen shut out from the prying world. Tied to a stake with a long rope was a fat turkey. "See de bird o' freedom?" says he, with a broad African grin. "Cotehed dis chick about las' Chris'mus ober de moun'n. Hide him yer all day, an' nighttime take him out in de beech woods so he get fat fo' de day o' jubilee. Now I got de Thanksgiving tas'e in de mouf, an' jubilee done come."

After more of his palaver it was settled that he would roast the bird in a rude oven built in the hillside, then serve it in the cabin. Meanwhile we wrount tramps would sleep ourselves into a fitting appetite for the jubilee feast, which was to be turkey and corn pone. Black Sam led us back to the cabin and shoved aside some of the poles which made a flooring for the loft overhead. Climbing up with the

kees. Tell 'em I ain't seed none, an' dey ast why dis roastin' dat turkey does fur dis niggah 'lone. 'Kase I jess hear about freedom, I tole 'em. 'I got no mammy, no missus, no chile, only my yaller dog Slim. Done roast dat turkey all for dis niggah's jubilee."

"Den dey eat dat turkey an' pone an' nebber gib me none an' nebber say 'Tank yo', Black Sam.' All de time dey eatin' dey kept lookin' up to dem poles overhead, musin' like dey want see behin' dare. Dey keep mighty still, though. One secesh, he stan' outside, an' de odders take some turkey fo' him. Bymeby dat man he say, 'Sh!' an' dey all grab deir swords an' pistols an' sneak out, nebber sayin' nuttin'. Den I know why dey doan go peekin' behin' dem poles where yo' all hidin' an' doan take Black Sam along back to he ole massa."

We forgot our hunger and the vanished luxuries over this recital, for we



SAM WAS SITTING LIKE A MOURNER.

dem turkey bones an' dat empty pone dish," continued he, "an' I moan 'kase yo' all git none. Den I skeered call yo' 'kase yo' kill dis niggah fo' shuah. I stan' lookin' at de bones, gittin' hungrier ev'y minute. Nex' t'ing somebody sneakin' up an' holler in de do', 'Whar dem rebs?' 'Whar rebs yo' mean?' I say."

"Cap'n Noah's company," he say, "We seed 'em comin' dis a-way las' night. Dis one a Yankee all in blue, an' I up an' tole 'Im I rose dat turkey all by mysef an' Cap'n Noah's men come eat 'im all an' den run away. Dis Yank he luff all acrost he face, but he make no noise laffin'. Speck he t'ink bery funny how de rebs eat dis chile's turkey an' pone. Den he go out de do', an' long come about 200 Yanks."

"Den I git mad at dem Yanks, an' I say: 'S'pose yo' t'ink dis niggah cryin' 'kase he got no turkey an' pone, he an' Slim. I ain't cryin'. I'ze laffin' on de inside 'kase I'ze a free niggah.' Den dey all luff ag'in an' go way down de lane, sneakin' after dem Noah's men. Now, whar yo' all laffin' at?"

"Yankee soldiers, Sam? Are you sure?" gasped half a dozen in a breath. We didn't make any noise, either, not being certain we were out of the woods yet; but every mother's son of us grinned like the man in the moon. Yankees of the right stripe were what we were looking to meet up with more than a feast of turkey and pone.

"Shuah, mars, shuah. Linkum sengers from up de Kanawha way. I 'heered



WE SCRAPPED TOGETHER A LITTLE YANKEE MONKEY.

Cap'n Noah's men say dey all skeered o' Yankee sengers paintin' dis a-way."

At last we were among friends—good enough fortune to draw thanks from yearning stomachs. We scraped together a little Yankee money to reward Black Sam for the loss of his jubilee dinner and for saving our necks with that lone nigger bluff, which so effectively dulled the curiosity of Noah's infamous gang.

The negro grinned at the sight of the greenbacks, coming with his newly discovered freedom. We kept on grinning in our joy at being once more in "God's country," surrounded by boys in blue. No doubt the bushwhackers were grinning, too, over the after taste of that unexpected dinner. They got away from their pursuers, but we didn't begrudge them this good fortune. And as we got next to Uncle Sam's fat rations in the saddle pouches of Crook's Kanawha cavalry division a few hours later we didn't begrudge them their monopoly of Black Sam's jubilee turkey and pone.

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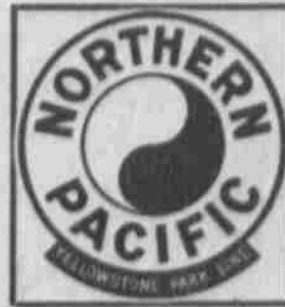
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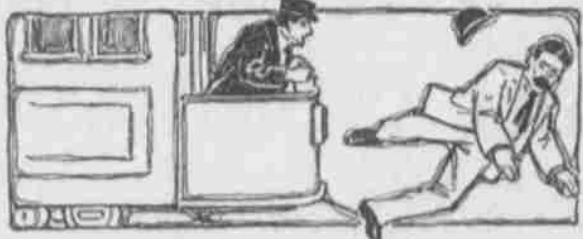
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DULY THANKFUL

BY
ROY FARRELL GREENE

I'm thankful for the sunshine, an' I'm thankful for the cloud,
I'm thankful for the best o' health an' feelin' rather proud
I think in spite o' accidents that carry folks away
I still can say I'm thankful I'm a-livin' here t'day!
I've easily dodged the trolleys, which are always grounds for fear;
I quite escaped a sunstroke in the dog days o' the year.
An' so I'm filled with thankfulness an' ain't disposed t' fret
Because, you see, I'm much too poor t' own an auto yet.



Perhaps since last Thanksgiving if I'd been a millionaire
I might have been a-guidin' o' an auto here an' there
An' had a fearful smashup in some record breakin' race;
I might t'day be lyin' in some quiet restin' place.
An' so I say I'm thankful that I'm livin' here t'day
An' had the luck t' keep myself well out o' danger's way.
Though things have been ag'in me in a way, I've no regret;
I'm thankful that an auto hasn't mangled me as yet.



I haven't raced an auto, so I've heard no victim wail;
I'll own I broke no record, but I haven't been in jail.
An' so I'm duly thankful there's no damage bills t' pay
T' weepin' wife or orphans on this blest Thanksgiving day.
I'm thankful for the sunshine an' I'm thankful for the cloud,
I'm thankful I am livin' an' a mixin' in the crowd;
But, more than all, I'm thankful that I haven't been beset
With the worry that is born of auto ownership, as yet!

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llee of freedom his simple faith told him must come. With eyes almost bursting from their sockets he listened to our story of the emancipation—how Lincoln had struck the fetters off from every slave and if once he could reach Yankee territory there would be no more dragging him back to slavery. When the poor wretch comprehended the wonderful story he sat silent for a long time. Then he looked into the face of each of us, a gleam of peace glowing brighter and brighter on his bronzy skin. "Yo' all is shuah 'nuff Yanks," said he, "else yo' ain't talkin' a-way to Black Sam." Nothing we could say was stronger than the negro's logic. "Yo's Yanks, an' yo's hungry. I'ze hungry, too—hungry for turkey, 'kase dis about Thanksgiving time. 'Ze gwine kill de bird o' freedom an' gib yo' all a dinner." For a moment he thought the startling news of emancipation had turned the poor slave's brain. There was no sign of poultry culture about the premises.

Black Sam saw the doubt written on our faces. "Oh, I'ze got dat turkey, all right!" he shouted. "Bin waitin' 'tween ear fur tas'e o' him. 'Twus dis a-way: 'lowed de niggahs gwine get free all account o' Massa Linkum, an' I said

help of a rude bench, we found a carpeting of mountain grass for our bed and a space just large enough to lie down upon in fashion, as we'd done in prison, and aired by a hole cut in the gables. Black Sam descended, and we moved the loose poles back into position. "Ain' no bushwhackin' secesh gwine luk fur yo' up dare," said he, with a chuckle, and went his way to prepare the turkey.

After a long sleep we awoke and crept down from the loft, wondering that we had not been bidden to the feast. Black Sam was sitting like a mourner, with his lank yellow dog for a companion in misery. By the light of a waning fire in the chimney we saw the well picked bones of a turkey and some scraps of pone on the board. What had happened? Surely that wretched negro and his woebegone dog had not regaled themselves on the bird of freedom. We looked from one to the other of our crowd and then to our host, who tremblingly began his story of the disastrous jubilee fete. Said he: "Dessa I git dat turkey an' dat pone ready an' mek to call yo' all to Thanksgiving when 'long come passel o' Cap'n Noah's secesh critter company speakin' around an' say dey lookin' fur Yan-